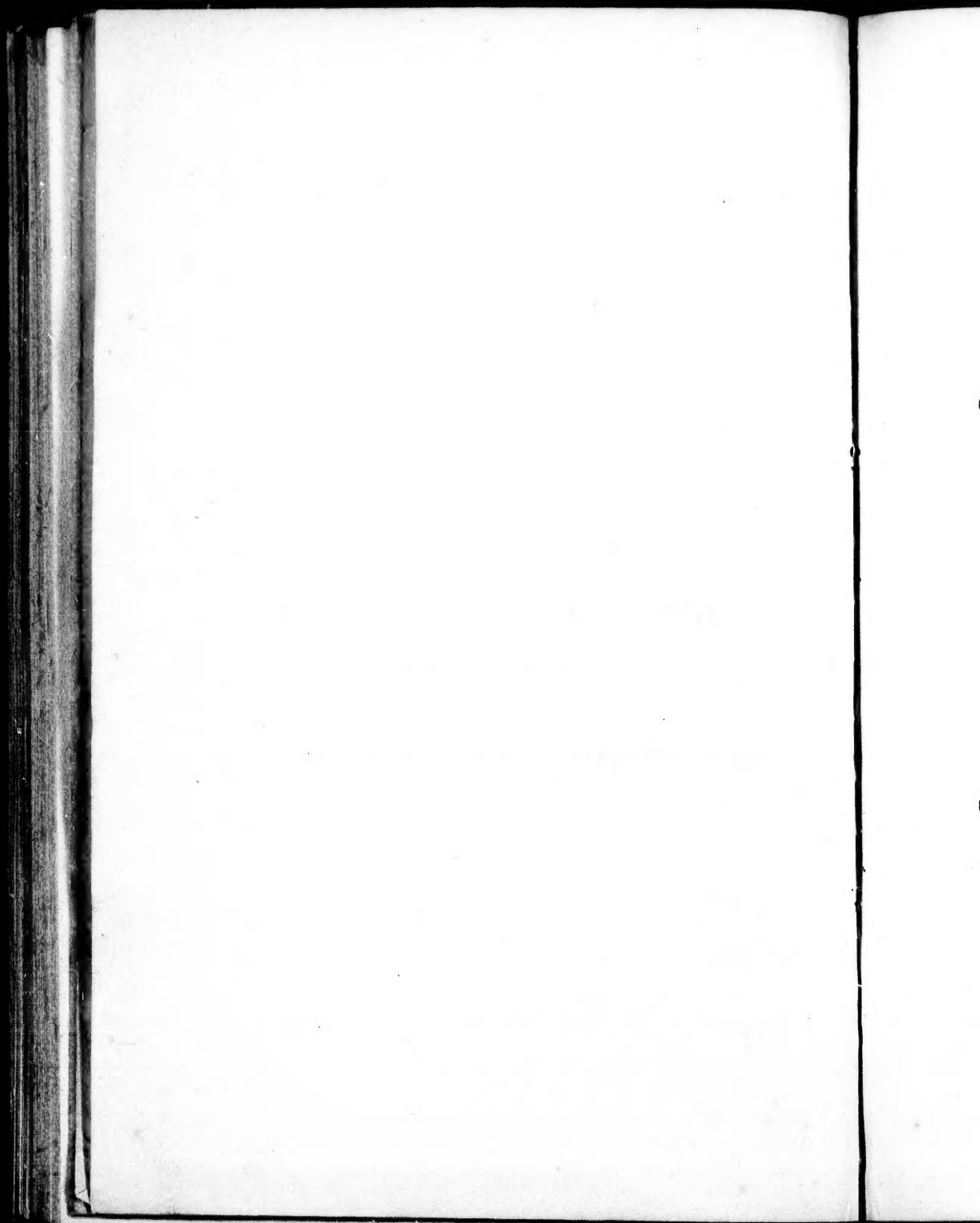

AN APPEAL IN BEHALF
OF THE MISSIONS
IN CANADA.



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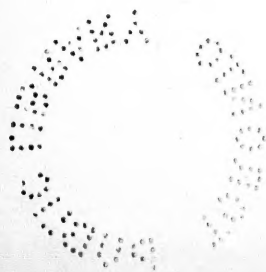
33 The Profits of the Second Edition will be given in aid of the
Canadian Church.

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AN APPEAL, &c.

AT a numerous MEETING of the District Committee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, held at *Bedford*, on *Monday*, December 23, 1833, The Hon. and Rev. H. C. CUST in the Chair, a Member having communicated some information which it appeared desirable to make more generally known, was requested to publish the substance of his statement, which is briefly as follows :—

THE principal object of the present Meeting is to consider whether any measures can be adopted by this Committee to assist the Parent Society, in meeting the fearful deficiency in its funds, occasioned by the diminution and speedy cessation of the Parliamentary Grant, which has hitherto enabled the Board to support, in insufficient numbers, and upon a barely competent subsistence, a most exemplary body of Clergy in the Canadian Colonies, under the denomination of Missionaries.

Heretofore a portion of the Colonial Clergy received salaries from the British Government, while others were maintained by our Incorporated Society; but after a few years His Majesty's Ministers adopted the more simple and

economical plan of making an annual Grant of £15,500* to the Society, in aid of their colonial missions. This grant, on the faith of which all the subsisting arrangements for Ministers, Catechists, and Schoolmasters, &c. have been formed, it has now been signified, will be reduced to £12,000 for the year 1832, £8,000 for 1833, and £4,000 for 1834, after which it is to cease altogether.

In this unlooked for and cruel emergency, when the regular and steady support and countenance of the Government is withdrawn from the Colonial Church, no common liberality and exertion to uphold the Protestant Establishment has become the paramount duty of individuals desirous to preserve the Christian religion itself in that country from sinking into utter disregard and neglect.

This Meeting may naturally expect that some explanation should be afforded of the causes which render it impossible for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in England, or the resources of the Colonies, to afford a suitable maintenance for the Clergy, Catechists, and Schoolmasters; and at the same time that proof should be offered that the Church, which we are called upon to uphold, is efficient, and acceptable to the Colonists.

With respect to the former of these points, the brief statement of the Parent Society, that, after reducing the present inadequate stipends of their Missionaries to one half of their present amount, they will still be compelled

* Society's Reports.

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to sell their funded capital, in order to meet the demands upon their liberality ; and that they are wholly precluded from any attempt to comply with the numerous and urgent petitions on their table to increase the number of their missions, must be amply sufficient to satisfy us of the imperative duty which calls on us to strengthen their hands in the great cause which they have undertaken.

As the opinion is, I believe prevalent, that a provision has been made for the maintenance of the Colonial Clergy, by what are denominated the *Clergy Reserves*, it will be necessary to enter into some detail of facts, to shew that the colonial resources are at present unavailable to the support of a Religious Establishment commensurate with the wants of the population.

* At the capitulation of the province of Quebec in 1774, the obligation of paying tithes was left by General Amhurst to be decided by the King's pleasure. And the decision of the British government was that the Roman Catholic Clergy should be allowed to receive tithes from their own people, but that Protestants should be exempted. At the same time it was declared that the Protestant Episcopal Church of England should be the Established Church throughout His Britannic Majesty's dominions, and directions were given that, in laying out new townships in Lower Canada, glebes of not less than 300, nor more than 500 acres, should be set apart for the maintenance of its Clergy.

* Speech of Archdeacon Strachan, 1828.

So late as the year 1793, there were but *six* Episcopalian clergymen in the whole province of Lower Canada, two of whom were settled at Quebec, and two at Montreal; and but *three* in the whole Upper Province*; and there was not one Church nor Parsonage House belonging to the establishment. These circumstances being represented to the Government, King George III. in 1791, signified to †Parliament his desire to be enabled to make a permanent provision for the maintenance of the Church in the Canadian colonies, and an ‡Act was accordingly passed which appropriates one seventh of the lands in Upper Canada to this purpose.

In pursuance of this wise and beneficent policy, the Act enables His Majesty to erect the two provinces into a Diocese, under the Title of "the Bishopric of Quebec in the Province of Canterbury," thereby making it an integral part of the Church of England; and accordingly the King, in the year 1793, appointed the late Dr. Mountain the first Bishop, and constituted him and his Clergy, by Charter, a Corporation, for the management of the Church Lands, which are entitled Clergy Reserves.

It must be obvious that, in a new country, where the *fee-simple* of good land varied from §two to ten dollars per acre, and where consequently *no rent* could be obtained, the endowment thus made by Government could only be

* Quebec Mercury, 1830.

† Archdeacon Strachan's Speech.

‡ 31 Geo. III. cap. 31.

§ Letter of the Hon. and Rev. C. J. Stewart, 1824, p. 6.

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prospective; and that no present income could be derived from it for the support of a body of Clergy, who, under the auspices of the Bishop, had in a few years increased in number from *nine* (two of whom were inefficient from the infirmities of age) to upwards of *eighty*, while the number of Churches amounted to about *fifty* in the two provinces.*

The Clergy, therefore, were maintained in the Canadian Colonies partly by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and in part by the Parliamentary Grant. But the Bishop, on his triennial visitations, (which regularly took place throughout a Diocese nearly a thousand miles in length, even during the war,) finding the number of Clergy very unequal to the wants of the population, and being assailed with almost innumerable and urgent petitions from the new settlers to send them missionaries, began in the year 1819 to give effect to the Corporation for managing the Clergy Reserves, in the hope of rendering them available to the establishment of additional Ministers among a people so earnestly desirous of it, that no less than *twelve* Churches were built in the *expectation*† that their petitions might produce the desired effect.

It was found, however, that the powers of the Corporation were not sufficient for the purposes intended, and an application was accordingly made to Government to procure an Act of Parliament which should enable them to *sell* a portion of the Reserves, and to appropriate

* Quebec Mercury, 1820.

† Quebec Mercury, 1830.

the funds to the establishment of missions, the building of churches and parsonage houses, and other ecclesiastical purposes.

It should be observed, that the words of the Act appropriate the lands in question to "the maintenance and support of a Protestant Clergy;"* and the exertions of the Corporation having awakened attention to the *ultimate* value of the Church property, the Presbyterian Clergy preferred a claim to share in the benefit as being, equally with the Episcopalians, "a Protestant Clergy," and forming the established Church in one part of the King's Dominions.

Although it appeared evident that the Kirk of Scotland had not been contemplated in the 31 George III. c. 31. nor in the charter, inasmuch as they formed no part of the Corporation, His Majesty's Government conceived that their claim was in equity entitled to consideration; and these circumstances led to a prolonged correspondence and discussion, and eventually to the oral communications of Archdeacon Strachan, who came to England for the purpose, with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the year 1827.

The Clergy Reserves, being thus a subject of litigation, were precluded in a great measure from improvement, and it appears from a speech of Mr. Wilmot Horton, in the

* Letters to the Earl of Liverpool, on the State of the Colonies, Letter 1. p. 37.

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House of Commons,* in 1827, that the whole of them produced scarcely £400 a year. The contest, in the mean time, was carried on with considerable earnestness on both sides; and the various sects of Dissenters in the Colonies, finding that the claims of the Scotch Presbyterians were likely to be successful, became competitors with them for a share in the spoils, and sent home a variety of delegates to enforce their pretensions, who made the most exaggerated, and in many cases, unfounded statements respecting the number and importance of the sectaries, the paucity of Episcopalians, and the general disaffection of the Colonists from the Established Church.

The effect of this violent attack, in the first instance sufficiently alarming, because no one was at hand to contradict it, was, in the end, extremely serviceable to the cause of the Church. The Government, embarrassed by the endless variety of conflicting claims and contradictory statements, was more disposed to leave the Endowment of the Church as they found it; and the Clergy, as soon as they became aware of the statements made against them, invited inquiry, and furnished documents which have triumphantly repelled the attempt to discredit them, and have been the means of awakening attention to their exemplary usefulness and general acceptableness among the settlers.

The result has been that, without coming to any immediate decision respecting the claims of other denominations to a share in the proceeds of the Clergy Reserves, His

* Parliamentary Reports, 1827.

Majesty's Ministers in 1827, procured an Act of Parliament, which enables the Corporation to sell the lands to a limited extent, and to apply the funds arising from the sale, according to the provisions of the Act 31 Geo. III. c. 31.

It must be unnecessary to observe, that to force a rapid sale of uncultivated lands at the present low price of property in the colonies, would be an act of the most unjustifiable improvidence. The Corporation, however, anxious to meet the wishes of the Colonists, and the views of Government, have, from time to time, effected a few sales in Upper Canada, and have accounted for the amount thus raised. In the Lower Province no purchasers have as yet been found.

That the supply thus derived is too scanty to have any material effect upon the condition of the Church, is sufficiently proved by the statements of the Society already noticed—the lamentable fact, that the exemplary and laborious ministers of our church must be deprived of half the pittance upon which they have hitherto subsisted, and that no addition to their number can possibly be made to meet the rapid growth of the population, and the wide extension of new settlements.

Of the character of that body of Clergy it would be difficult to speak too highly. Animated by the still surviving spirit of that Prelate who first formed and fostered the Canadian Church, they shrink from no labours, they repine at no privations, they are deterred by no difficulties, and alarmed by no dangers, in the discharge of their

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arduous and incessant duties. The inclemency of an Arctic winter, the wildness of primeval forests, the fury of storms and floods, cannot deter them from preaching the Word of Life at the appointed time and place. Nor, since the days of the Apostles, has the Church of Christ been adorned by a Ministry more disinterested, more pure in doctrine, more zealous in duty, more patient under every discouragement.

The necessity for such a Ministry can scarcely be estimated in a country like England, where, however, justly we lament the divisions in the Christian body, and prefer the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church to those of other denominations, it must be admitted that there is among Dissenting Ministers much sound knowledge of the Gospel, and practical usefulness in teaching. But in a new and wild country, the case is widely different. A scattered population, gasping for the Bread of Life, and longing above all things for the instruction of authorized Missionaries, are driven, where these are denied to them, to appease the appetite for instruction with the incoherent antinomian, and seditious ranting of desperate adventurers, who are commonly the most fanatical enthusiasts, or downright impostors; and the monstrous impieties and disgusting immoralities of camp-meetings, and other similar perversions of religion, are so notorious as to spare the necessity for a painful enumeration.

Hence arises the striking difference observed by all travellers between the character of the back-woodsmen of the United States, and that of the Canadian settlers. The



former deprived of all regular religious instruction form perhaps the most shocking specimen of human depravity in the history of the world. The latter, where they are settled in the townships with a resident Clergyman, or even with the occasional instruction of a visiting Missionary,* present a delightful picture of primitive society, living in the interchange of mutual good offices, exercising charity to the poor, and hospitality to strangers, and studying to bring up their families in the practice of Christian piety.

The Colonists are themselves fully sensible of the value and importance of the services rendered them by the Government and by the Society; and deep indeed will be their dismay and sorrow, when they find that blessing thus unseasonably withdrawn from them. The tables of the Corporation, of the Bishop, of the District Committees in the Colonies, loaded with their petitions for additional Missionaries afford a less convincing proof of their earnestness, and of their attachment to our Communion, than the long and painful journies which many of them frequently undertake, through trackless forests, and in inclement seasons, to hear that preaching, and to receive those sacraments from which they derive strength and comfort in this life, and the hope of everlasting happiness hereafter.

Nor are the utmost efforts and self-denying sacrifices of individuals on the spot, wanting to contribute their part in

* The Hon. and Rev. C. J. Stewart, now Bishop of Quebec, was the first Visiting Missionary.

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the work of establishing the Church. Money they have not to bestow. But materials for building, and labour in erecting churches, and parsonages, and schools, and in clearing a glebe for their Minister, they rejoice to afford, and welcome the task with thankfulness.

Under these circumstances, when they are once made known, it is impossible to doubt that the liberality and Christian piety of individuals will seek to compensate, in some degree, the funds of the Society for the deprivation of the Government Grant; and thus it may be that the failure of that supply shall eventually become a blessing to the Colonial Church, by rousing the attention of their brethren at home to the situation of a people sprung from the same blood, worshipping in the same tongue, nursed in the same faith, and zealously attached to the same pure doctrine and primitive discipline, which has rendered the Church of England so long the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.